

# cou·ple

**cou·ple** (kʌpəl) *noun*

1. Two items of the same kind; a pair.
2. Something that joins or connects two things together; a link.
3. (*used with a sing. or pl. verb*). a. Two people united, as by betrothal or marriage. b. Two people together.
4. *Informal*. A few; several: *a couple of days*.
5. *Physics*. A pair of forces of equal magnitude acting in parallel but opposite directions, capable of causing rotation but not translation.

*verb*

**cou·pled, cou·pling, cou·ples** *verb, transitive*

1. To link together; connect: *coupled her refusal with an explanation*.
2. a. To join as spouses; marry. b. To join in sexual union.
3. *Electricity*. To link (two circuits or currents) as by magnetic induction.

*verb, intransitive*

1. To form pairs; join.
2. To unite sexually; copulate.
3. To join chemically.

*adjective*

*Informal*.

Two or few: "*Every couple years the urge strikes, to . . . haul off to a new site*" (Garrison Keillor).

[Middle English, from Old French, from Latin *c* *pula*, bond, pair.]

**Synonyms:** *couple, pair, brace, yoke*. These nouns denote two individuals of the same kind together. *Couple* does not necessarily imply more than association: *a square dance performed by four couples*. The term may also mean simply "few": *a couple of minutes; a couple of books*. *Pair* stresses close association and often reciprocal dependence of things (*a pair of gloves; a pair of pajamas*); sometimes it denotes a single thing with interdependent parts (*a pair of scissors; a pair of spectacles*). *Brace* refers principally to certain animals or game birds (*a brace of hounds; a brace of partridges*), and *yoke* to two joined draft animals (*a yoke of oxen*).

**Usage Note:** When used to refer to two people who function socially as a unit, as in *a married couple*, the word *couple* may take either a singular or a plural verb, depending on whether the members are considered individually or collectively: *The couple were married last week. Only one couple was unaccounted for*. When a pronoun follows, *they* and *their* are more common than *it* and *its*: *The couple decided to spend their (less commonly its) vacation in Italy*. Care should be taken that the verb and the pronoun agree in number: *The couple have their (less commonly has its) primary residence in New York*. Although the phrase *a couple of* has been well established in English since before the Renaissance, it has been criticized on several grounds. Grammarians used to insist that *a couple of* should be used only to refer to things closely linked to one another and so was improperly used in phrases such as *a couple of years ago*. This objection has not been heard in some time and was never well supported. Modern critics have sometimes maintained that *a couple of* is too inexact to be appropriate in formal writing. But the inexactitude of *a couple of* may serve a useful communicative purpose, suggesting that the writer is indifferent to the precise number of items involved. Thus the sentence *She lives only a couple of miles away* implies not only that the distance is short but that its exact measure is unimportant. Furthermore, *a couple of* is different from *a few* in that it does not imply that the relevant amount is relatively small. One might say admiringly of an exceptional center fielder that *he can throw the ball a couple of hundred feet*, but not, except ironically, *a few hundred feet*, which would suggest that such a throw was unremarkable. The usage should be considered unobjectionable on all levels of style.

*The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Third Edition* copyright © 1992 by Houghton Mifflin Company. Electronic version licensed from INSO Corporation; further reproduction and distribution restricted in accordance with the Copyright Law of the United States. All rights reserved.

## con·nect

**con·nect** (kŏn kt) *verb*

**con·nect·ed**, **con·nect·ing**, **con·nects** *verb, transitive*

1. To join or fasten together.
2. To associate or consider as related: *no reason to connect the two events*. See synonyms at *join*.
3. To join to or by means of a communications circuit: *Please connect me to the number in San Diego*.
4. To plug in (an electrical cord or device) to an outlet.

*verb, intransitive*

1. To become joined or united: *two streams connecting to form a river*.
2. To be scheduled so as to provide continuing service, as between airplanes or buses.
3. To establish a rapport or relationship; relate: *The candidate failed to connect with the voters*.
4. *Sports*. To hit or play a ball successfully: *The batter connected for a home run*.

[Middle English *connecten*, from Latin *c nectere* : *c -*, *co-* + *nectere*, to bind.]

— **con·nect i·ble** or **con·nect a·ble** *adjective*

— **con·nec tor** or **con·nect er** *noun*

*The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Third Edition* copyright © 1992 by Houghton Mifflin Company. Electronic version licensed from INSO Corporation; further reproduction and distribution restricted in accordance with the Copyright Law of the United States. All rights reserved.

# join

**join** (join) *verb*

**joined, join-ing, joins** *verb, transitive*

1. To put or bring together so as to make continuous or form a unit: *join two boards with nails; joined hands in a circle.*
2. To put or bring into close association or relationship: *were joined by marriage; join forces.*
3. To connect (points), as with a straight line.
4. To meet and merge with: *where the creek joins the river.*
5. To become a part or member of: *join a club.*
6. To come into the company of: *joined the group in the waiting room.*
7. To participate with in an act or activity: *The committee joins me in welcoming you.*
8. To adjoin.
9. To engage in; enter into: *Opposing armies joined battle on the plain.*

*verb, intransitive*

1. To come together so as to form a connection: *where the two bones join.*
2. To act together; form an alliance: *The two factions joined to oppose the measure.*
3. To become a member of a group.
4. To take part; participate: *joined in the search.*

*noun*

A joint; a junction.

[Middle English *joinen*, from Old French *joindre*, *joign-*, *join-*, from Latin *iungere*.]

**Synonyms:** *join, combine, unite, link, connect, relate, associate.* These verbs mean to fasten or affix or become fastened or affixed. *Join* applies to the physical contact, connection, or union of at least two separate things and to the coming together of persons, as into a group: *The children joined hands. Join the panels of fabric at the selvages. "Join the union, girls, and together say Equal Pay for Equal Work" (Susan B. Anthony).* *Combine* suggests the mixing or merging of components, often for a specific or shared purpose: *The cook combined whipped cream, sugar, and vanilla to make a topping for the compote. "When bad men combine, the good must associate" (Edmund Burke).* *Unite* stresses the coherence or oneness of the persons or things joined: *Can strips of plastic be united with epoxy? The attack on their country united squabbling political factions in a common purpose.* *Link* and *connect* imply a firm attachment in which individual components nevertheless retain their identities: *linked poverty and unemployment to the social unrest besetting the city. The chief of police is in no way connected with the scandal.* *Relate* refers to connection of persons through marriage or kinship (*Though they have the same surname, the two are not even distantly related*) or of things through logical association (*The two events seem to be related*). *Associate* usually implies a relationship of persons as partners or allies: *His daughter is associated with him in the family business.* It can also refer to a relationship of things that are similar or complementary or that have a connection in one's thoughts: *I can forgive his bluntness because it is associated with a basic kindness of spirit.*

*The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Third Edition* copyright © 1992 by Houghton Mifflin Company. Electronic version licensed from INSO Corporation; further reproduction and distribution restricted in accordance with the Copyright Law of the United States. All rights reserved.